



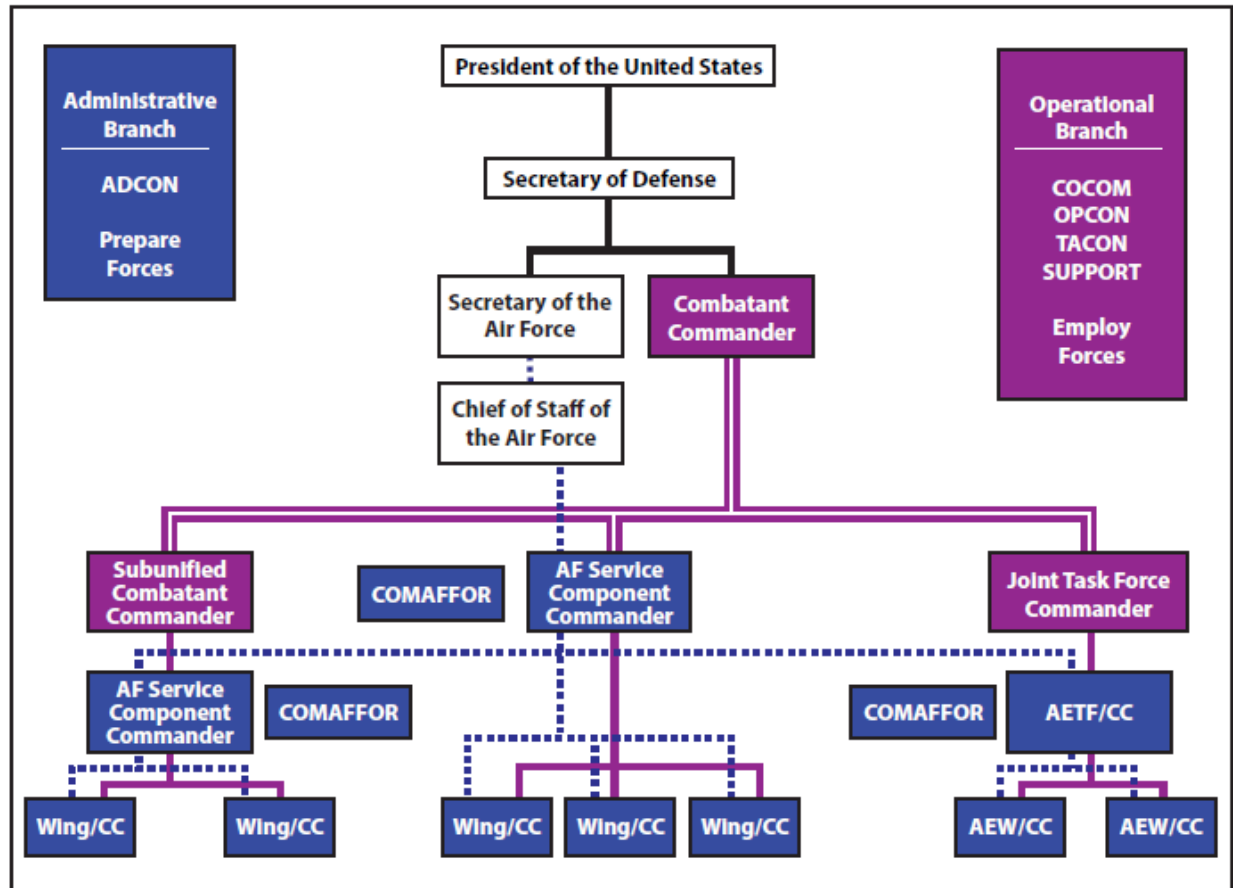
OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCHES OF THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

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The President and the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) exercise authority and control of the armed forces through two distinct branches of the chain of command and control (C2). One branch runs from the President, through the SecDef to the [combatant commanders](#) (CCDRs) for missions and forces assigned to their commands. This is commonly referred to as the “operational” [chain of command](#). The other branch, commonly referred to as the “administrative” chain of command, runs from the President, through the SecDef, to the Secretaries of the military Departments, and as prescribed by the Secretaries, to the commanders of military Service forces.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments exercise [administrative control](#) (ADCON) over Service forces through their respective Service chiefs and Service commanders. The Service chiefs, except as otherwise prescribed by law, perform their duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretaries of the respective military Departments to whom they are directly responsible.

See following figure, “Air Force Forces within the Chain of Command.”



ADCON - administrative control
 AETF - air and space expeditionary task force
 AEW - air expeditionary wing
 CC - commander
 COCOM - combatant command
 COMAFFOR - commander, Air Force forces
 OPCON - operational control
 TACON - tactical control

Air Force Forces within the Chain of Command